

Stinger Hockey Preview

"The Secret of Success"

The Concordia hockey team will have a fine mixture of experience and youthful talent this season.

The 1988-89 version of the Stingers finished with a 14-10-2 record. This was good enough for 30 points and third place behind Trois-Rivières and McGill in the O.U.A.A. East. However, the Stingers have failed to get past the first round of the playoffs since appearing in the 1984 C.I.A.U. National Finals.

Nonetheless, **Head Coach Paul Arsenault** still found a silver lining to the last campaign. "We sure have a good foundation for this year," declares Arsenault. "It looks very good."

The Stingers have lost four players off last year's team, three of whom were captains. The toughest to replace will be **All-Canadian Mark Mahon**. The three-year veteran was the **M.Y.P. in the O.U.A.A. last season**. Mahon has signed a professional contract in West Germany. His leadership skills and outstanding play will be missed by the team. "It's very difficult to lose a player and person of Mark's calibre," understated Arsenault. "However, it bodes well for our hockey program when players can further their career in Europe after graduation."

Concordia will also lose alternate captains **Paul Brophy** and **Tod Button** to graduation. With the loss of these players, Arsenault expects **O.U.A.A. All-Star and Guy Lafleur Trophy winner Richard Laplante** to step to the forefront. Second-year players **E.J. Janiszewski** and **John Gravelle** will also shoulder more of a leadership role. Arsenault believes that leadership may come from unexpected sources this year. "**Rob Boyle** is returning after a two-year absence," states Arsenault. "He's like a bigger, more physical Mark Mahon. I expect him to be a major force in the O.U.A.A. this year."

The Defense

After a solid recruiting year, the Stingers may have one of the best young groups of defensemen in the C.I.A.U. Second-year blueliners **E.J. Janiszewski** (6-1, 185) and **Louis Leger** (6-4, 212) were both solid last year. Janiszewski led all Stinger defensemen with 22 points while Leger is an imposing figure and moves the puck very well. **Claude Bisailon** (5-10, 217) is also back in bone-crunching form after one year of O.U.A.A. hockey.

Key newcomers include **Jeff Gill** (Lennoxville, Que.), **Pierre Bouthillier** (Granby, Que.), **Bob Cameron** (Montreal, Que.) and **Lee Odelein** (Quill Lake, Sask.). Gill, the M.Y.P. for Champlain College last year, has been very impressive in the early going. Odelein comes to the Stingers via the S.J.H.L. where he was a league All-Star with the Yorkton Terriers. Cameron also has impressive credentials with the **John Abbott Islanders** where he was team captain last season and a CEGEP All-Star in 1988 while Bouthillier toiled with the Hawkesbury Hawks (Tier II) during the 1988-89 campaign.

The Forwards

Front and center for the Stingers will be **Richard Laplante** (5-11, 190), now in his third season with the team. Laplante is a two-time O.U.A.A. All-Star and has scored 120 points in 46 league games. He will likely be teamed with second-year winger **John Gravelle** (5-8, 182) and returning veteran **Rob Boyle** (6-1, 215) on the Stingers' number one line. Gravelle finished with 21 points in 13 league games last season while Boyle is returning after a two-year layoff.

Second-year winger **Mark Davidson** (6-2, 192), who scored 21 goals last year, is expected to be a leader up front again. He will be joined by hard-working sophomores **Bob Rowatt** (5-8, 150) and **Steve Simpson** (6-1, 175). Fourth-year forward/defenseman **Todd Adams** (6-1, 180) is also expected to shoulder some of the scoring burden left by the departure of All-Canadian Mark Mahon.

Several impressive newcomers have made line combinations interesting for coaches Paul Arsenault and Yves Beauchage. Plattsburgh State transfer **Chris Lovisek** (6-3, 195) is an imposing winger who likes the tough going. He will likely be teamed with Davidson and rookie **Stephane Therrien** (6-0, 188) on the Stingers second unit. Therrien scored 86 points in the Quebec Tier II league last year after playing with Granby of the Q.M.J.H.L. the previous two years.

Other notable rookies who will see O.U.A.A. action this year include **Dean Delvecchio** (Montreal, Que.) and **Marc Desmarais** (Montreal, Que.) who both graduated from the fine **John Abbott Islander** hockey program. **Pat Ryan** (Ottawa, Ont.) and **Scott Kerins** (Bramalea, Ont.) have also impressed the coaches in the early going. Ryan was a two-time All-Star in the Ontario Tier II circuit while Kerins starred for the Bramalea Blues in the Metro Junior B league last year.

Goaltenders

The return of O.U.A.A. All-Star **Robert Desjardins** (3.65 G.A.A.) gives the Stingers a big boost in the fight for national prominence. The former M.V.P. of the Q.M.J.H.L. had an 89% save ratio last season. He will have N.C.A.A. transfer **Todd Talbot** (Montreal, Que.) to help this year. The duo should provide the team with a solid last line of defense.

Outlook

It is very important for the team to peak late in the season if they hope to advance past the first round of the playoffs. Arsenault has been working hard to prepare the team for a series of exhibition games against Hockey East teams. "We had such a strong year in 1988 that a good exhibition season is needed for us to prepare for later in the year," stated Arsenault.

As for the Stingers, everything points to a strong season and a better playoff performance this year. With such a strong nucleus and college hockey's third-winningest coach behind the bench, the future looks bright for Concordia hockey.